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Surely We Can Reconcile Spying and Citizen Rights

A man living in Canada has brought a slander suit at Baltimore against a man working for the federal government in Washington. The resident of Canada says the other injured him by calling him a Soviet agent. Defense attorneys say the statements were made by the defendant as a CIA employe in possession of information furnished him by the CIA:

"Under these circumstances there arises in favor of the defendant an absolute privilege which precludes, even under a showing of actual malice, any possibility of recovery by the plaintiff."

The threat of such lawsuits to our spying endeavors is obvious. So is the threat of such a defense to the rights of any innocent person who might be so accused. Let's hope that judicial ingenuity finds a way out. We need effective spying, for national survival. And we need effective protection of citizen rights to make national survival that much more valuable to free people.